

# NUTRITION & HEALING

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## War on Holistic... telephones?

In 37 years of medical practice in Washington State, I've never seen or heard of an investigation like this one:

"Dr. Wright:

The Washington State Medical Quality Assurance Commission has received a complaint alleging that your office procedure of having all incoming telephone calls go to voice mail resulted in considerable physician-patient communication problems with the potential of harm to patients..."

The M"Q"AC investigator's letter went on to demand a "written summary discussing the above allegation" within 14 days, but contained no allegation of harm to any patient caused by Tahoma Clinic's telephone system.

I called our attorney, who didn't think I was really serious until I actually read him the letter, dated October 29, 2007. He asked me to fax him a copy, and promised to write the investigator. His letter contained the following common sense:

"I am wondering whether, prior to sending out this letter, you or anyone on the staff took the trouble to spend some time periodically calling Dr. Wright's clinic to see if, in fact, all incoming calls go to voice mail."

That had been my first thought, too. How could any business expect to *stay* in business if all telephone calls are sent to voicemail? That's just common sense—but, then

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## Forget those needles—erase your wrinkles with a powdered drink mix Plus 2 other all-natural age-fighters your skin will thank you for

By Jonathan V. Wright, M.D.

A few weeks ago, our 31-year-old daughter came home for a visit. She hadn't seen her mother for several weeks, and not long after she arrived, she asked what Holly had been doing "this time" to make her skin look so good. As she put it, Holly's skin looked "healthier than ever." She commented that her skin tone was deeper and more vibrant and that some of the little wrinkles around Holly's eyes were actually gone.

Holly's always taken very good care of herself: never smoked, doesn't drink alcohol, eats as much "organic" and "free range" as possible, uses absolutely no sugar, refined food or food chemicals, and takes her vitamins, minerals, and botanicals. She's also used bio-identical hormones for over 15 years, and most of that time she has also used a skin cream containing a tiny

amount of estriol (more on that a little later).

Of course, I have always considered her beautiful, but she really does appear much younger than her actual age: In fact, from time to time she's asked to show her driver's license to prove that she qualifies for the "over-55" discount offered at certain places.

But she had been doing something extra "this time." I admit that I hadn't noticed a great difference, but, in my defense, it's harder to see changes in someone you're around every day (or perhaps men just aren't as "tuned in" to those sorts of details as women are). But regardless of whether or not I'd noticed, our daughter certainly had.

Holly's improvements had come about as a result of her taking (for the second time—I'll tell you about the first time in just a bit) a

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Dr. Jonathan V. Wright's

## NUTRITION & HEALING

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### Our mission:

*Nutrition & Healing* is dedicated to helping you keep yourself and your family healthy by the safest and most effective means possible. Every month, you'll get information about diet, vitamins, minerals, herbs, natural hormones, natural energies, and other substances and techniques to prevent and heal illness, while prolonging your healthy life span.

A graduate of Harvard University and the University of Michigan Medical School (1969), Dr. Jonathan V. Wright has been practicing natural and nutritional medicine at the Tahoma Clinic in Renton, Washington, since 1973. Based on enormous volumes of library and clinical research, along with tens of thousands of clinical consultations, he is exceptionally well-qualified to bring you a unique blending of the most up-to-date information and the best and still most effective natural therapies developed by preceding generations.

*Nutrition & Healing* cannot improve on these famous words:

*"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."*

The inalienable right to life must include the right to care for one's own life. The inalienable right to liberty must include the right to choose whatever means we wish to care for ourselves. In addition to publishing the best of information about natural health care, *Nutrition & Healing* urges its readers to remember their inalienable rights to life, liberty, and freedom of choice in health care. This information is published to help in the effort to exercise these inalienable rights, and to warn of ever-present attempts of both government and private organizations to restrict them.

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### all-natural age-fighters

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combination containing collagen, hyaluronic acid, and other natural ingredients.

## Why these anti-aging "miracles" aren't always all they're cracked up to be

You've likely already heard of products containing collagen and hyaluronic acid (HA). They've both been touted for their skin "anti-aging" effects for awhile. And using them is logical since collagen is the major extracellular protein responsible for the strength and flexibility of connective tissue, including the skin. In fact, 25 to 30 percent of bodily protein is collagen. And HA is one of the biological hallmarks of youth: Baby skin has the most and content declines with age.

But if it were as easy as it sounds in the commercials advertising products containing collagen and HA, everyone would be using them—and would have younger-looking skin with fewer wrinkles as a result. Since that isn't the case, you've probably gathered that there are a few problems with using many of these products.

"Generally accepted" opinion has been that swallowing collagen and hyaluronic acid won't do that much good, as they'd be completely digested (or nearly so) in the intestines. So emphasis has been placed on injecting them directly into the skin, especially facial skin, to replace the collagen and hyaluronic acid our own skin makes less of as we grow older.

Since all the "approved" forms of collagen and HA are injectable, they all require visits to a doctor—and they're quite costly. But even worse than these drawbacks is that the injectable forms of collagen and HA used in most cases are not exactly the same as the human forms. Collagen shots typically include cow collagen instead of human collagen, and HA injections come from rooster and bacterial sources, so the chances of unwanted "side effects" are higher. To be fair, there is at least one injectable that uses bio-identical hyaluronic acid. (For a more complete review of several of these products, see *Nutrition & Healing* for February 2004.)

But it wasn't injections of bio-identical HA that had elicited such praise from our daughter about Holly's appearance. In fact, she hadn't been using injections of anything. Even though most sources agree that taking collagen and HA orally won't help the skin, at least one study—not to mention Holly's first-hand experience—has shown that it does.

## Say goodbye to sagging, puffy, wrinkled eyes

In this blinded and randomized eight-week research trial, 40 women ages 35 to 60 took 7.5 or 8.5 grams daily of a product called Toki®. Toki is a powdered drink mix that combines collagen, hyaluronic acid, and other natural ingredients and is sweetened with stevia. According to the researchers, the formulation "resulted in a highly statistically significant improvement in peri-orbital [around the eyes] wrinkling, in peri-orbital aging, and peri-orbital over-all facial aging. The investigator's mean global improvement

scores of overall facial aging as compared to baseline photographs were also highly significant.”<sup>1</sup>

The women participating in the study also did self-evaluations. And each of them also reported significant improvement in sagging, puffiness, and wrinkling around the eyes, as well as noticeable improvement in overall facial aging—the same improvements our daughter noticed in Holly after she started taking Toki

This research also certainly appears to disprove the idea that injecting collagen is the only way to prevent it from being broken down during digestion: Levels of collagen in the participants’ blood were 114 percent higher at the end of the 8 weeks than at the outset of the study. So apparently, at least some of the collagen swallowed in the Toki formula “made it through” without being broken down in the gut.

Of course, that doesn’t prove outright that the very same collagen caused the women’s significant facial improvements, but there’s no question that something in Toki did.

Holly’s Toki regimen started with 6 grams (one packet) three times a day for two weeks. Then she tapered back to two doses daily for another two weeks. Now she’s following the “maintainence” dose of one packet daily.

### First time’s a charm

As I mentioned earlier (and as our daughter’s comment implied), this isn’t the first time Holly has tried injection-less anti-aging treatments. Three or four years ago at yet another convention, she was given a small sample bottle of a hyaluronic acid product called Synovoderma.<sup>®</sup> Knowing that babies’ skin has considerably more hyaluronic acid than adult skin, and that dermatologists and plastic surgeons were using non-bio-identical injections of hyaluronic acid to improve their patients’ appearance,

she decided that a natural form might be worth a try. At the very least, she knew it wouldn’t hurt to swallow it, especially since the capsules contained nothing else but rice bran and beeswax (apparently fillers). So she read the label, and took three of the capsules twice daily.

Towards the end of the first week, she was washing her face, and asked me to come take a look. “There’s all this dead skin coming off,” she pointed out. “I’ve never had that much dead skin come off at one time, ever!” Her face cloth was definitely covered with shreds of old skin; the only time I’ve seen that much coming off someone at once has been the “peeling” that sometimes occurs awhile after a sunburn, and Holly definitely hadn’t had that.

For the next few days, more dead skin than usual came off each time Holly washed her face, although each day it was a little less, until the exfoliation subsided to normal. She continued to use three capsules twice daily for three weeks, as the product packaging instructed, then cut back to three a day for several weeks. About that time, our daughter (the same one who visited recently) came by, and noticed an improvement in her mother’s facial skin then too.

While it’s true that Synovoderma<sup>®</sup> may be more expensive than many other supplements, and Toki<sup>®</sup> is definitely more expensive than other supplements, the difference either one can make to your complexion may be worth it. Unlike most of the facial injections, both these supplements are all natural, and very unlikely to cause significant “side effects.” And if cost is an issue to you, facial injections are way, way more expensive than either Synovoderma<sup>®</sup> or Toki<sup>®</sup>—and take considerably more time and trouble. If you’ve been thinking at all of cosmetic facial injections, it’s worth your while to try one or both first.

But in addition to these, there is one more natural anti-aging tool for your facial skin that you may want to consider.

### Bio-identical HRT: Good for you inside and out

The other skin treatment Holly has been using for years is a topical cream containing bio-identical estriol. Usually, when I mention this hormone it’s in reference to its role in bio-identical hormone replacement therapy, which is typically prescribed for women dealing with the various symptoms associated with menopause (hot flashes, vaginal dryness, etc.). But over 10 years ago, I read about the results of a 1987 study in which 14 post-menopausal women were treated for three weeks with a topical skin application containing estriol (and compared with another six women who received the same topical treatment without estriol).

According to the researchers, after three weeks “The elastic fibers in the [skin] were thickened, better orientated and slightly increased in number in half of these patients but in none of the control patients. The epidermal thickness was slightly increased in four of the patients treated with estriol.”<sup>2</sup> And this after only three weeks!

I guessed that a longer period of time would have shown a greater success rate, and even better results. So I asked my compounding pharmacist friends at Key Pharmacy ([www.keynutritionrx.com](http://www.keynutritionrx.com), 1-800-878-1322) to put estriol together with other ingredients into a skin crème

Since the quantity of estriol in the skin crème was small, and not likely to have a systemic effect, Holly started using it. Since then, she’s noticed that she’s gotten considerably fewer and less noticeable wrinkles than many of her friends (and the benefits she’s gotten from products like Synovoderma and

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